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ABSTRACT

The potential for computers in indexing popular fiction study materials is discussed, and specific examples of comic book indexing are provided through descriptions of projects and a bibliography. The 4-stage evolutionary development of popular fiction studies includes: (1) discovery and reading; (2) bibliography and collecting; (3) cataloging and indexing; and (4) history and criticism. Librarians, particularly with the help of computers, can contribute to the collection, preservation, cataloging, and indexing of comic books, an area of popular fiction largely ignored by libraries in the past. Major comic book indexing projects are now under way for the two largest United States comic book publishers, Marvel and DC. Various other indexing projects have examined specific aspects of comics. A bibliography lists the comic indexes in the Russel B. Nye Popular Culture Collection at Michigan State University. (CWM)

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# INDEXING THE COMICS

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## A LIBRARIAN'S PERSPECTIVE ON COMICS RESEARCH

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SUGGESTED PERSPECTIVE ON INDEXING

The development of popular fiction studies into a discipline can be seen as a four-stage evolution.

The first stage is one of discovery and reading. People become mystery freaks or science fiction addicts, and a few with scholarly proclivities feel a need to study and understand their "disease." These prospective scholars soon learn that complete runs and sets of popular fiction are hard to find, and so begins the second stage.

The second stage is bibliography and collecting, finding out what exists and getting copies. Many people do this privately, but academic libraries with bibliography and collection building staff are potentially in a good position to do this.

The third stage is cataloging and indexing, the central contribution of librarians and scholars who use the tools of library science. Indexing of many kinds is necessary, to bring out points of similarity and congruence in a field that is so large.

The fourth stage is "history and criticism," the writing of histories and aesthetic principles, critical articles and annotations, and so on.

All four of these stages go forward together, of course, and not particularly in logical order. The point of drawing it out this way is to highlight the possibility of major contributions by librarians at the present stage of popular culture studies.

One benefit that the growth of the military-industrial complex (the sci-tech community) offers to humanities scholars is the computer and its capacity to handle large masses of data quickly. Librarians are using computers regularly these days. The long slow processes of cataloging and indexing are natural applications for computers. This is still largely a potential benefit to humanities indexers, however. In my opinion, very little really good humanities indexing is done by computers...but this is not the fault of the computers.

The development of computer technology parallels the growing interest in popular culture studies. In both cases, we are confronting masses of information and looking for new ways to organize and understand it. Indexing is one area in which the two trends can combine, and if we ever really match wavelengths there will be an explosion in popular culture studies. The old cottage industry of indexing may have a big future.

Comic books are particularly in need of indexing. From their beginning in the 1930s to 1971, there did not even exist a published list of their titles! Robert Overstreet's Comic Book Price Guide remedied that. The Library of Congress, which catalogs "everything," has cataloged only one comic book in the 45 or so years of comic books (the one where Superman meets Spider-Man). Other popular fiction at least makes it to the library catalog.

The collection, preservation, cataloging and indexing of comic books have been pretty much left in the hands of the fans. Comics fandom, as that nebulous infrastructure of amateur scholars is called, hasn't done too badly. You can find out almost anything you need to know, if you can get connected. The following short survey of comics indexing is indicative of what's available to the diligent seeker.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Two major comic book indexing projects are under way right now, one for each of the two largest U.S. comic book publishers, Marvel and DC.

The Marvel project is being done by George Olshevsky in Toronto. The indexes are table of contents style indexes, with cross-indexing by characters and personnel. Almost any kind of study of Marvel Comics can be made easier, quicker and better with this finding tool. The Olshevsky index is ambitious in its format and scope. It includes, for example, cover reproductions of each of the issues it indexes, and covers all Marvel superhero stories since Fantastic Four #1 in 1961. This index was circulated in fandom originally as a giant volume of computer printout...Olshevsky is a computer programmer...and our library has one of these early editions dated 1971.

The other project of similar magnitude is still circulating in fandom, without professional backing as yet. The center of gravity of the project is in Huntsville, Alabama, the home of Gene Reed. Reed's large opus DC Story Index 1935-1974 probably makes him the premier indexer of DC comics on the continent. Reed is also the mainspring and co-ordinator of APA-I, which stands for Amateur Press Alliance for Indexing. An "apa" is an institution of some complexity. In the case of the indexing apa, the membership goal is 20, and each member is required to produce, every three months, a minimum four-page index to some aspect of comics. Each member makes 25 copies of his index and mails them to Gene Reed. Reed collates them into 25 piles, each containing a full set of the indexes for that quarter, and mails one set to each contributor. The extra sets (or "mailings") are sold to

prospective members or new members to raise money for postage.

The variety of possible indexing projects seems to be endless. Jerry Bails and Hames Ware, for instance, have produced The Who's Who of American Comic Books, four volumes that list every person known to have worked on American comic books. Bails also published Howard Keltner's Index to Golden Age Comic Books, and compiled The Collector's Guide: The First Heroic Age. The former lists the features of each heroic comic of the golden age, and the latter indexes the comics by certain of those features. Bails is now working on a complete index to both the Who's Who and Keltner's Index.

Doub Kendig in British Columbia, a librarian, is compiling an Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the Comics, concentrating on newspaper strips. This is being published in short segments in his Comic Research Library Newsletter. Denis Gifford is doing a similar project for British comics.

Maurice Horn's World Encyclopedia of the Comics will soon be supplemented by a World Encyclopedia of Cartoons. Besides this, the only other trade book project that comes to mind is Michael Fleisher's Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes, one volume per character, of which Batman and Wonder Woman have appeared so far.

Here at Michigan State we're working on a Subject Index to Comic Books, categorizing comics by the various trends and conventions represented in our 9,000 issue collection. Many more projects are under way, including three of my own and at least 20 by other members of the indexing apa.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliography lists the comics indexes in the Russel B. Nye Popular Culture Collection at Michigan State University. As far as can be determined this is the world's first bibliography of comics indexes.

The entries are taken from catalog cards. The body of each has been condensed to three paragraphs: (1) the citation, (2) the description, and (3) the index points that have been established for the various catalogs that these records are part of.

1. The Avengers (Indexes)
Citation index to Marvel comics, 1961-1980--The Avengers #1-100 / Compiled by Randall W. Scott. Preliminary edition I. East Lansing, Mich. : Published by the compiler for APA-I, 1977 printing.
[6] p. ; 28 cm. "November 1977 printing." "Updated monthly and printed on demand."
1. The Avengers - Indexes. 2. Fanzines. I. Scott, Randall William, 1947- II. Title. PN6728.A1872

2. Bails, Jerry G.
The collector's guide : the first heroic age / by Jerry G. Bails. Reprint of 1st ed. Detroit : J.G. Bails, 1969.
68 p. : ill. ; 28 cm. Cover title. "Vol. I." "A Panelologist publication." "Addenda" inside front and back covers.
1. Comic books, strips, etc. - United States - Indexes. 2. Superhero comics - Indexes. I. Title. PN6725.B28 1969

3. Bails, Jerry G.
The who's who of American comic books. Editors: Jerry Bails and Hames Ware. 1st ed. [Detroit, 1973-1976]
4 v. illus. 28 cm.
1. Comic books, strips, etc. - United States - Biography. I. Ware, Hames, joint author. II. Title. PN6725.B3

4. Brown, Gary.
Magnus, robot fighter : notes and index / published and compiled by Gary Brown. Miami : Brown, 1978.
10 p. : ill. ; 28 cm. -- (Menathee Press ; no. 295) Caption title. Cover title: Magnus, robot fighter : an index and appreciation. "Intended for the sixth mailing of Apa-I and the 167th of CAPA-Alpha."
1. Magnus robot fighter - Indexes. 2. Fanzines. I. Title. II. Series. PN6725.B7M3

5. Brown, Gary.
Space family Robinson lost in space : notes and index / written and compiled by Gary Brown ; cover art by Alan Hutchinson. Miami : Brown, 1977.
9 p. ; 28 cm. -- (Menathee Press ; no. 273) Caption title. "Intended for Apa-I [third mailing] and CAPA-alpha."
1. Space family Robinson - Indexes. 2. Lost in space - Indexes. 3. Robinsonades. 4. Fanzines. I. Title. II. Series. PN6725.B7563

6. Brown, Gary.
Turok and the sons of stone : index work for Turok, Kona, Naza and Toka / published by Gary Brown. Miami : Brown, 1978.
29 p. : ill. ; 28 cm. -- (Menathee Press ; no. 286) Caption title. Cover title: Turok, Son of Stone : checklist. "Intended for the fifth mailing of Apa-I and the 164th mailing of CAPA-Alpha."
1. Turok, son of stone - Indexes. 2. Kona - Indexes. 3. Naza - Indexes. 4. Toka - Indexes. 5. Fanzines. I. Title. II. Series PN6725.B7T8

7. Fleisher, Michael L.
The encyclopedia of comic book heroes / by Michael L. Fleisher, assisted by Janet E. Lincoln. New York : Macmillan, c1976-
v. : ill. ; 29 cm. CONTENTS:--v.1. Batman.--v.2. Wonder Woman.
1. Comic books, strips, etc. - United States - Dictionaries. 2. Superhero comics - Indexes. I. Lincoln, Janet E., joint author. II. Title. PN6725.F5

8. Gifford, Denis.
The British comic catalogue, 1874-1974 / Denis Gifford. Westport, Conn. : Greenwood Press, 1975.
xiv, 210 p. ; 28 cm. Includes index.
1. Comic books, strips, etc. - Great Britain - Bibliography. I. Title. Z5956.C6G54

9. Gruenwald, Mark.
Jack Kirby's new gods index / by Mark Gruenwald. [New York: Gruenwald, 1978-]
v. ; 28 cm. CONTENTS:--pt.1. Stories.--pt.2. Characters.
1. Kirby, Jack./New gods. 2. Forever people - Indexes. 3. New gods - Indexes. 4. Mister Miracle - Indexes. 5. Superman's pal, Jimmy Olsen - Indexes. 6. Superhero comics - Indexes. I. Title. II. Title: New gods index. PN6725.G7J3

10. Iron Man (Indexes)
Citation index to Marvel comics, 1961-1980--Iron Man #1-100 / compiled by Randall W. Scott. Preliminary edition I. East Lansing, Mich. : Published by the compiler for APA-I, 1978 printing.
[14]p. ; 28 cm. "May 1978 printing."
1. Iron man - Indexes. 2. Fanzines. I. Scott, Randall William, 1947- II. Title PN6728.I7

11. Kaltner, Howard.
Howard Kaltner's index to golden age comic books / Howard Kaltner ; addendum by Jerry Bails. Detroit : Bails, 1976.
[30] p. ; 28 cm.
1. Comic books, strips, etc. - United States - Indexes. 2. Superhero comics - Indexes. I. Bails, Jerry G. II. Title. PN6725.K8

12. Kempkes, Wolfgang.
International bibliography of comics literature. Bibliographie der internationalen Literatur über Comics. New York : R.R. Bowker Co., 1971.
213, [11] p. illus. 22 cm. English and German. Includes indexes. "Bildhang/Pictorial Appendix": p. [216] - [224]
1. Comic books, strips, etc. - Bibliography. I. Title. II. Title: Bibliographie der internationalen Literatur über Comics. Z5956.C6K45

13. The Marvel comics index. v. 1- . 1976- .
Toronto, G&T Enterprises.
v. ill. 28 cm. Irregular. Conceived and compiled by G. Olshevsky. Volume 1 will consist of fourteen parts. Volume 2- will be supplements to these parts. cf. v. 1, no. 4, p. 4.
1. Marvel Comics Group - Indexes. 2. Comic books, strips, etc. - Indexes. I. Olshevsky, George. PN6725.M3

14. Mullaney, Dean.
Gene Colan Marvel index / compiled by Dean Mullaney. Philadelphia : Mullaney, 1978.
Leaves a-c, 12 leaves ; 28 cm. Caption title from leaf 1. "An Eclipse Enterprises presentation." "For inclusion in Apa-I, fourth mailing."
1. Colan, Gene. 2. Marvel Comics Group - Indexes. 3. Fanzines. I. Title. PN6725.M85G6

15. Mullaney, Dean.
The Steve Gerber index / by Dean Mullaney ; cover art by Richard Brunton. [Philadelphia : Mullaney] , 1978.
[13] leaves ; 28 cm. Caption title. "An Eclipse Enterprises Production, for inclusion in APA-I, fifth mailing." "Includes all of Gerber's comic book stories [almost entirely for Marvel Comics] ."
1. Gerber, Stephen Ross, 1947- 2. Marvel Comics Group - Indexes. 3. Fanzines. I. Title. PN6725.M85J7

16. Olshevsky, George.
Marvel superheroes comic checklist, through September 1971 / George Olshevsky . Toronto : University of Toronto, 1971.
340 leaves ; 29 x 40 cm. Computer printout in binder. Includes "A brief history of Marvel comics", and synopses of each series. Includes indices.
1. Marvel Comics Group - Indexes. 2. Superhero comics - Indexes. I. Title. PN6714F.O4

17. Olshevsky, George.
The Amazing Spider-Man [index] / conceived and compiled by George Olshevsky. Toronto : G & T Enterprises, 1976.
79 p. : ill. ; 28 cm. -- (The Marvel comics index ; v. 1, no. 1)
Includes cross-indexes by personnel and characters.
1. Amazing Spider-Man - Indexes. 2. Spider-Man - Indexes. 3. Superheros comics - Indexes. I. Title. II. Series. PN6725.M3x.1,no.1

18. Olshevsky, George.
Conan and the barbarians [index] / conceived and compiled by George Olshevsky. Toronto : G & T Enterprises, 1976.
96 p. : ill. ; 28 cm. -- (The Marvel comics index ; v. 1, no. 2)
Includes cross-indexes by personnel and characters.
1. Conan the barbarian - Indexes. 2. Ka-Zar - Indexes. 3. Kull the conqueror - Indexes. 4. Savage tales - Indexes. 5. Sword and sorcery comics - Indexes. I. Title. II. Series PN6725.M3x.1,no.2

19. Olshevsky, George.
The Fantastic Four and the Silver Surfer [index] / conceived and compiled by George Olshevsky. Toronto : G & T Enterprises, 1977.
100 p. : ill. 28cm. -- (The Marvel comics index ; v. 1, no. 6)
Includes cross-indexes by personnel and characters.
1. Fantastic Four - Indexes. 2. Silver Surfer - Indexes. 3. Superheros comics - Indexes. I. Title. II. Series. PN6725.M3x.1,no.6

20. Olshevsky, George.
Heroes from Strange tales / conceived and compiled by George Olshevsky. Toronto : G & T Enterprises, 1977.
96 p. : ill. ; 28 cm. -- (The Marvel comic index ; v. 1, no. 6)
Includes cross-indexes by personnel and characters.
1. Strange tales - Indexes. 2. Doctor Strange - Indexes. 3. Nick Fury, agent of SHIELD - Indexes. 4. Superheros comics - Indexes. 5. Title. II. Series. PN6725.M3x.1,no.5

21. Olshevsky, George.
The mighty Thor [index] / conceived and compiled by George Olshevsky ; produced by George Olshevsky and Tony Fruitt. Toronto : G & T Enterprises, 1977.
96 p. : ill. ; 28 cm. -- (The Marvel comics index ; v. 1, no. 5)
Includes cross-indexes by personnel and characters.
1. Thor (Comic book) - Indexes. 2. Journey into mystery - Indexes. 3. Superheros comics - Indexes. I. Title. II. Series. PN6725.M3x.1,no.5

22. Reed, Gene.
Archie adventure series index / Gene Reed. Huntsville, Alabama : Reed, [1979]
15 p. ; 22 cm. Published for APA-I, no. 6.
1. Archie adventure series - Indexes. 2. Adventures of the Fly - Indexes. 3. Fly man - Indexes. 4. Mighty comics - Indexes. 5. Mighty crusaders - Indexes. 6. The Shadow (Archie Series) - Indexes. 7. Double life of private Strong - Indexes. 8. Adventures of the Jaguar - Indexes. 9. Fanzines. I. Title. PN6725.R487

28. Reed, Gene
The Dixon and Hackman / [by Gene Reed]. Huntsville : The Comic Library, 1973.
[13] p. ; 28 cm. -- (Wily Indie ; no. 1) Cover title. Index to Dixon and Hackman comic book stories of the 1960's.
1. The Dixon - Indexes. 2. The Dixon and Hackman - Indexes. 3. Hackman - Indexes. 4. Superheros comics - Indexes. 5. Fanzines. 6. Title. 7. Series. PN6725.A9

29. Reed, Gene.
R E Index. Huntsville, Al. : The Comic Library.
v. 28 cm. annual. Began with 1973?
1. RE comics group - Indexes. 2. Comic books, strips, etc. - Indexes. 3. The Comic Library. 4. Title. PN6710.R3

30. Reed, Gene.
R E story index, 1935-1979 = [Huntsville, Al., Gene Reed]
v. 28 cm. biennial. "Incomplete edition." 1935-1979 =
No issue/year binder. Added title: Reed's RE story title index. Kept up to date with annual supplements called RE story title index supplements.
1. RE comics group - Indexes. 2. Comic books, strips, etc. - Indexes. 3. Title. II. Title: R E story title index. III. Title: Reed's RE story title index. PN6710.A9

31. Reed, Gene.
Lois Lane index / Gene Reed. Huntsville, Alabama : Reed, [197?]
19 p. ; 28 cm. -- (Second Crucible Enterprises publication ; no. 02) Cover title. [Published for APA-I, third mailing.]
1. Superman's girl friend, Lois Lane - Indexes. 2. Superheros comics - Indexes. 3. Fanzines. 4. Title. II. Series. PN6725.A9L6

32. Reed, Gene.
Metal men index / Gene Reed. Huntsville, Al. : Reed, 1973.
8 p. ; 28 cm. "For inclusion in APA-I" [fifth mailing]
"A Second Crucible Enterprises publication." Cross-indexed by titles and personnel.
1. Metal men - Indexes. 2. Superheros comics - Indexes. 3. Fanzines. 4. Title. PN6725.A9M4

33. Reed, Gene.
Phantom stranger index / ... published by Gene Reed. Huntsville, Ala. : Reed, [1975]
7, [1] p. ; 28 cm. Includes reprint information, chronology of publication, additional assignments and artist and writer cross-index. "For the fourth mailing of APA-I."
1. Phantom stranger - Indexes. 2. Fanzines. 3. Title.
PN6725.A9P47

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[illegible]

34. Tiefenbacher, Michael
"House of mystery" index / by Michael Tiefenbacher. Menomonee Falls, Wis. : Published by the compiler for APA-I, 1977.
iii, 31 p. ; 28 cm. "Title page added for binding." "First mailing." Includes a chronological list of issues, with contents, and a cross index to artists and writers.
1. House of mystery. 2. House of mystery - Indexes. 3. Fanzines. I. House of mystery (Indexes) II. Title. PN6726.H6T5

35. Tiefenbacher, Michael.
"House of secrets" index / by Michael Tiefenbacher. Menomonee Falls, Wis. : Published by the compiler for APA-I, 1977.
20 p. ; 28 cm. "Title page added for binding". "Second and Third Mailings". Includes a list of issues no. 1-150 (Nov.-Dec. 1956 through Feb.-March 1978) with contents, and a cross index to artists and writers.
1. House of secrets. 2. House of secrets - Indexes. 3. Fanzines. I. House of secrets (Indexes) II. Title. PN6726.H64T5

36. Tiefenbacher, Michael.
A summary guide to DC comics / [Michael Tiefenbacher. Menomonee Falls, Wis. : Tiefenbacher, 1977].
7 p. ; 28 cm. Caption title. Published for APA-I, first mailing. "A title index to DC Comics 1935 - present."
1. DC Comics Group - Indexes. 2. Comic books, strips, etc. - Indexes. 3. Fanzines. I. Title. PN6725.T55

37. The world encyclopedia of comics / edited by Maurice Horn. New York : Chelsea House, 1976.
790 p. : ill. (some col.) ; 31 cm. Bibliography: p. 737-741. Includes indexes.
1. Comic books, strips, etc. - Dictionaries. I. Horn, Maurice. PN6710f.W6 1976